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ABSTRACT

A study examined the graphic devices used on the front pages of 78 American newspapers with a circulation of 25,000 or more and explored editors' attitudes toward the importance of front page appearance and graphics to newspaper readers. Questionnaires were sent to the newspapers' staff members primarily responsible for front page layout and design. Among the results were the following: (1) front page layout was done most often by the news editor; (2) most papers had more than 10 persons on the graphic staff; (3) the model front page was modular in design with six columns across and five or six stories, half of which jumped to an inside page; (4) most front pages had two photographs, which were most likely to relate to a front page story rather than to one inside; (5) most dailies were turning to four-color photographs; (6) there was a near-even split among the respondents as to whether graphic design is something readers take into account when deciding which newspaper to read; (7) editors rated the use of graphs and maps, placement of largest photograph, and body type size as the elements most noticeable to readers; (8) most editors said they were satisfied with the front page appearance of their own newspaper, but only one-half agreed that the front pages of American dailies are generally attractive; (9) highest ratings for appearance went to the "Miami Herald" and "USA Today"; and (10) editors agreed that appearance can be a critical factor in a competitive market. (HTH)

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A Study of America's Front Pages: How They Look

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A Study of America's Front Pages: How They Look

To many Americans, journalism is still epitomized by the front page of a daily newspaper. The images abound: giant headlines, dramatic photographs, newsboys on a streetcorner hawking the "extra" edition.

Page one has become a newspaper's showcase. It is history in its first draft and print journalism's moment in the sun without any advertisements.

Traditionally, the emphasis on a newspaper's front page has been to report the major stories of the day. Success has been defined by getting it first and getting it right. Today,there is a third element of success: getting it to look nice.

Major changes in the design of newspapers are not new. In the 1960s, a revolution of sorts occurred as many newspapers moved toward more legible body type, reduction of headline decks, elimination of column rules and horizontal makeup (Sissors, 1965).

But today, newspapers across the United States are paying more attention than ever before to their appearance. Larger dailies, and even some smaller ones[1], are hiring graphics arts specialists. The New

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[1]For example, the Danbury (Conn.) News Times and the Belleville (Ill.) News Democrat have both hired graphics artists recently.

York Times' graphics department comprises 60 staffers (Shapiro, 1982).

Newspapers conducting readership studies are asking more and more questions about appearance as well as content, and when results dictate changes, publishers are becoming increasingly willing to accept the importance of appearance and allocate resources to improve it.

In the last decade, most American daily newspapers have made at least minor changes in their appearance, such as a change in headline typeface. Others have received complete overhauls. For example, in 1982, the Quad City (Iowa) Times redesigned its format, emphasizing the use of color, teasers, larger headlines and more digests (Huenegard, 1982). Others which have completely changed their look include The Cape Cod (Mass.) Times and Ann Arbor (Mich.) News.

However, the new dedication to design is not universal. Hynds (1980) noted that some dailies cling to the basic design patterns of the nineteenth century. The design editor at one west coast newspaper complained: "our top management simply does not have the commitment that is necessary to produce a well-designed newspaper every day." Another editor said his newspaper rarely plans ahead on appearance as it does on content.

The 1982 debut of USA Today, the first nationwide daily, with its liberal use of color and charts may have an effect on the newspapers of the next decade. USA Today surveyed readers in five markets recently and found that they were greatly impressed with its use of color and its layout (Sports and weather, 1983). Color has certainly become an important part of American newspapers. At Scripps-Howard's newspapers, officials claim that color helps them keep pace with competitors and promote street sales (Scripps-Howard, 1983).

Not only do graphic devices make a newspaper look better, but editors are discovering they can also make it easier to read. Hynds (1980) said that the 6-column page is associated with reading ease, and Kahl (1975) found that horizontally designed pages can be read more quickly than vertical pages. Hvistendahl (1975) discovered that column width is a predictor of reading speed as well. He found that stories set on a 14-pica column (6-column page) were read more quickly than those set on 10.5 picas (8-column page).

It was also suggested that the 6-column page allows mug shots to be about one-third larger and gives headline writers greater flexibility (Headlines, 1971).

One of the keys to a successful newspaper page, according to Garcia (1980), is the selection of a "center

of visual impact"[2] to attract readers to the page and promote further reading of it. He wrote:

> To think graphically means to invite the reader into each page with attractive, provocative and orderly use of photos, typography and illustrations. It also means to recreate a sense of graphic identity and consistency through every page of the newspaper everyday (p. 1).

To be sure, however, not all of the evidence for graphic design and change comes from experts or is based on research. In a letter to The Quill, a reader complained about body type size: "Nine point is the absolute smallest you can go for readability," she told the editor (Lewton, 1982).

Previous Research

Studies dealing specifically with the graphics and design of American newspapers fall into two categories: studies of what editors are actually doing and studies of how readers are reacting to it.

One principal area of study has been concerned with the adoption of modern design at jointly owned newspapers. A 1978 study found that fewer than 10 percent of

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[2]Garcia, a noted expert on newspaper design, says that the "center of visual impact" can be a photograph, dominant display type, overall packaging (story and photo), art (charts, illustrations) or color.

dailies used any graphic devices[3] in their body copy, and that 37 percent of the newspapers had a front page news digest (Stone, Schweitzer & Weaver, 1978). They also found that newspapers were increasingly turning to the horizontal format, and that newspapers in the Southeast and Southwest led the way in modern design. Newspapers in larger cities, the authors wrote, tended to have more modern appearance.

When morning and evening newspapers which are jointly owned looked alike, they tend to reach a higher percentage of dual subscribers than when their appearances are dissimilar (Schweitzer, Weaver & Stone, 1977). In a third study, the same authors reported that jointly owned newspapers hoping to increase the market penetration of both dailies should use a different number of columns in their a.m. and p.m. editions (Weaver, Schweitzer & Stone, 1977).

Weaver, Mullins and McCombs (1974) found that in a competitive newspaper setting, the lower circulation daily tended to be more modern in design, while the leading newspaper was more likely to use traditional devices such as rules and smaller photographs. That was refuted in a later study which found no relationship between circulation and format (Click & Stempel, 1979).

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[3]Body type graphic devices include subheads, boldface paragraphs and boldface lead-ins.

In that thorough content analysis of the front pages of 99 dailies, Click and Stempel (1979) found no significant difference between larger and smaller circulation newspapers on various design aspects. While 84 percent of the large dailies (more than 100,000 circulation) had a horizontal design, 96 percent of the smaller circulation dailies also had abandoned the vertical format. They also found that most dailies used the 6-column page, and that 95 percent had eliminated vertical rules. Color was found to be used[4] more at larger dailies (21 percent) than at the smaller ones (4 percent).

The other studies have focused on what readers like and dislike about newspaper design. Click and Stempel (1968) found that readers favor the horizontal design over the old balanced design, and six years later the same authors found that men and women of all ages preferred the modern format (Click & Stempel, 1974). In 1976, they discovered that readers overwhelmingly prefer color (Click & Stempel, 1976), and readers were found to prefer modular designs and be receptive

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[4]At least one time in a five-day period.

to innovations in design (Click & Stempel, 1982).

This approval tendency is well demonstrated in a 1981 study of subscribers to the St. Cloud (Minn.) Daily Times. After the newspaper changed its graphic design, 82 percent of those surveyed said they liked the use of front page teasers, and 79 percent approved of the use of more photographs and illustrations. And, 81 percent said they liked the fact that all jumped stories ended up on the same inside page. The overall appearance of the front page received 59 percent approval[5]. However, acceptance was much weaker regarding the change of the newspaper flag from traditional to modern (47 percent). In their conclusion, Garcia, Click and Stempel (1981) wrote that readers are generally aware and accepting of obvious changes, and they even notice the more subtle changes.

Bain and Weaver (1979) found that readers like stories to run longer with fewer jumps to the inside, and that pages containing larger photographs were more thoroughly read. They also found that evenly wrapped stories were easiest for respondents to read.

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[5]While 59 percent said the front page looked better than before, 19 percent said it now looked worse and 22 percent said they were undecided or did not know. In a follow up survey two weeks later, 64 percent said the front page as redesigned looked better, 16 percent disagreed and21 percent were undecided or did not know.

Schweitzer (1980) also found that readers generally prefer modern graphic innovations. Among those receiving high approval ratings were overall modern design, summaries on the left side of the front page and boxes --or teasers--above the flag.

Purpose of Paper

The purpose of this paper is to examine the graphic devices on America's front pages in 1983. As such, it emerges as a state-of-the-art study of newspaper front pages. A second purpose is to explore some of the attitudes of editors toward the importance of appearance and how important, in their view, graphics are to newspaper readers.

Method

Newspapers with an average daily circulation of 25,000 or more were selected from the 1982 Editor & Publisher Yearbook using a systematic probability sampling method. Booklet-sized questionnaires, accompanied by a cover letter and business reply envelope, were mailed to 161 daily newspapers on Feb. 10, 1983. The questionnaire was addressed to the newspaper's staff member who is primarily responsible for front page layout and design.

Research Questions

The research questions in this study fall into two main categories:

I. What are the graphic and design characteristics of daily newspapers' front pages in 1983 with respect to:

a. Overall design: modular, horizontal, vertical

b. Columns: number, widths, variation, stories, jumps

c. Flag: size, face, location

d. Type: body, cutlines, bylines, headlines and overlines.

e. Photography: How many, how large?

f. Color

g. Indexes, digests: location, boxes

h. Rules

i. How do circulation and overall design relate to these various graphic charactertistics?

II. What are editors' attitudes toward graphics and design with respect to:

a. How attractive they find American dailies.

b. How important and noticeable they believe graphics and design are to their readers.

Characteristics of sample

Responses were received from 78 newspapers, representing a return rate of 48.4 percent. The responding dailies were categorized as follows: circulation of 25,000 to 50,000 (57.1 percent); 50,000 to 99,999 (19.5 percent); 100,000 to 249,999 (15.6 percent); more than 250,000 (7.8 percent). Two of every three newspapers (66.7 percent) are members of a newspaper group and 71.4 percent are not in direct competition with another daily.

Front page layout at the newspapers in the sample is done most often by the news editor (56.2 percent) or executive editor (12.3 percent); 5.5 percent of the dailies said the front page is designed by a graphics editor.

At 17 of the dailies, no member of the staff has graphics and design as a principal job responsibility; however, half of the newspapers with circulations of more than 100,000 said they have more than 10 such staffers. One daily, in fact, said that 30 of its staff members have graphics as their primary job responsibility.

The largest percentage of newspapers in the sample is in the north central region (28 percent), followed by the Northeast (24 percent), south central (18.7 percent), southeast (13 percent), southwest (10.7 percent) and northwest (5.3 percent).

Findings

The modal front page of American dailies in 1983 is modular in design with six columns across. It has either five or six stories, half of which jump to an inside page. There are two photographs, with the dominant photo four columns wide and six inches deep. Its location varies.

The body type is 9-point serif and the headlines are sans serif. Headlines for major stories range up to 72 point type. Cutlines are set in 10-point type, either serif or sans serif, and bylines are upper case, boldfaced and in either 9- or 10-point type.

The page contains an index, most likely in the lower left with a box around it. There is no news digest. The flag is set in traditional text, is 12 picas high and does not include an emblem. While the flag spans the width of the page, it is not always at the top of the page. On days when it is down in the page, there are teasers above it. The flag may be in color.

Following are the specific findings of the survey:

Overall design: Most daily newspapers have adopted a modular format for their front page (65.7 percent). Meanwhile, 30 percent use a horizontal layout and 4.3 percent have a vertical front page.

At both smaller[6] and larger daily newspapers, two thirds of the editors said they have a modular front page. Modular design has been adopted by 75 percent of the dailies which have direct competition and by 61.2 percent of those without direct competition.

Geographically, the largest percentage[7] of modular newspapers was in the Southeast (87.5 percent). The least modular region was the Southwest, where 50 percent of the dailies have a modular front page (see Table 1, page 13).

Columns: Most dailies (85.5 percent) use a 6-column front page, while others use either five or seven columns. Column widths vary, but at most dailies, body type is set on a column ranging from 12.1 to 13 picas wide (72.4 percent) or more than 13 picas (17 percent). While most front pages use the now-standard 6-column format, a majority of editors (62.4 percent) said they regularly vary widths of front page columns, resulting in part of the page being typeset on fewer, but wider, columns.

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[6]Smaller newspapers in this study are defined as those with an average daily circulation of 25,000 to 49,999. Larger newspapers are those with average daily circulation of 50,000 or more.

[7]Actually, 100 percent of the respondents from the northwest region said they have a modular front page design. However, since there were only three respondents from that region, results are reported from the regions with a more substantial return.

Table 1

Regional Percentages of Modular and Non-Modular Newspapers

	Non-Modular	Modular
Northeast[1]	29.4%	70.6%
Southeast	12.5%	87.5%
South Central	61.5%	38.5%
North Central	31.6%	68.4%
Northwest		100%
Southwest	50%	50%

[1]Northeast: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia.

Southeast: Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Mississippi, Alabama.

South Central: Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Texas.

North Central: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska.

Northwest: Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Alaska.

Southwest: California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Hawaii.

Modular newspapers are no more likely than others to vary column widths. And, the 6-column page has been adopted fairly equally by both modular (86.7 percent) and non-modular (78.3 percent) dailies.

Number of stories: Some daily newspapers publish more than 10 stories on their front page and others print as few as three. The mean number of front page stories was 5.74, reflecting the fact that 68.4 percent of dailies publish either five or six stories on page one.

However, many of those stories conclude inside the newspaper. While 48 percent of the newspapers jump anywhere from 25-to-75 percent of their front page stories, some jump every story and some jump none at all (see Table 2, page 15).

The shift among daily newspapers to a modular format has not noticeably affected the number of front page stories nor their likelihood to be jumped inside. Among the dailies with a non-modular format, 45.8 percent said they print five stories or fewer on page one, compared to 43.5 percent of the modular newspapers.

Table 2

Percentage of Newspapers
Jumping Stories
From Page One

	Percentage
Never Jump	8%
Jump less than 25%	20%
Jump 25 to 50%	24%
Jump 50.1 to 75%	24%
Jump 75.1 to 99.9%	18.7%
Jump 100%	5.3%

The flag: One of every three newspaper flags is less than 10 picas high (34.2 percent), and half of them (50 percent) stand between 10 and 12 picas. The range reported for flag heights was from 4-to-19 picas.

At most newspapers (85.6 percent), the flag spans the front page's width, but is not found at the top of the page. Only 14.7 percent of the editors said they always place the flag atop the page; another 48 percent said it is sometimes at the top and 37.3 percent said it is never at the top.

With the flag down in the page, editors must decide what to put above it. Most often, the flag is found beneath teasers, although other content is occasionally found above the flag (see Table 3, page 17). While many newspapers have moved their flags around the page, a majority have retained the traditional text typeface (53.2 percent). And, 72.7 percent of the flags do not have an emblem included.

Among the modular newspapers, 11 percent always put their flag atop the page, compared to 21 percent of the non-modular newspapers. The difference was not statistically significant.

Type: Body type is almost universally 9-point (77.9 percent), but some newspapers use either 8 or 10-point body type. Newspaper body type is either serif (90.3 percent) or block serif (9.7 percent).

Table 3

Percentage of Newspapers
Placing Various Items
Above Flag

	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
Stories	14.1%	29.7%	56.3%
Headlines	23.5%	17.2%	59.4%
Photos	14.1%	21.9%	62.5%
Digest	11.0%	9.4%	78.2%
Teasers	70.3%	14.1%	15.6%

Bylines are set in boldface type (79.3 percent), upper case characters (63.6 percent) and either 9- (44.4 percent) or 10-point type (38.9 percent). However, some newspapers reported byline sizes ranging from 8-to-12 point type.

Cutlines are generally found in 10-point type (60.6 percent), although 19.7 percent of the dailies set cutlines in 9-point type. The cutline size ranges from 8-to-14 point type. As a rule, cutlines are set in either sans serif (50.8 percent) or serif (41 percent) type, and are boldface at 52.1 percent of the newspapers.

Overlines ("headlines" for photos) are used by 80.3 percent of the newspapers surveyed. Of those newspapers using overlines, 27.9 percent use them with all front page photos. Most commonly they are set in either 18 or 24-point type (71.6 percent). Some dailies indicated that overline size depends on photograph size.

Headlines, meanwhile, are most often either sans serif (42 percent) or block serif (38 percent), with the remaining 20 percent using mainly serif headline type. For the lead story on an average news day, editors suggested the largest type size would be 72 point (51.3 percent) or 60 point (26.9 percent). When asked what headline size would be used to report the assassination of their state's governor, sizes ranged up to 144 point, with the most common responses being 72 point (29.2 percent),

96 point (22.2 percent), 120 point (16.7 percent) and 144 point (11.1 percent).[7]

Generally, editors indicated that the day's main headline would be in the traditional upper right corner (33.8 percent) or spanning the top section of the page (26 percent). However, 39 percent indicated that they follow no pattern for placement of the lead story headline.

The tradition of the largest page one headline in the upper right corner appears to be fading as more newspapers turn to a modular design. Among the non-modular dailies, 50 percent said their lead headline can most often be found in the upper right of the page; meanwhile, only 26.7 percent of the modular dailies confine their largest headline to that location. However, the difference between the modulars and non-modulars was not statistically significant. More telling perhaps is the result that at 44.4 percent of the modular dailies, there is no pattern to the location of the largest page one headline; meanwhile, among the non-modular daily newspapers, 25 percent indicated such flexibility (see Table 4, page 20).

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[7]Some responses indicated the selection of rarely used type sizes such as: 64 pt., 84 pt., 86 pt., 90 pt., 100 pt., 104 pt., 108 pt., 112 pt., and 160 pt.

Table 4

Percentage of Modular
and Non-Modular Newspapers'
Placement of the Largest Headline

	Upper Right	Upper Left	Across The Top	No Set Pattern
Modular	50%	4.2%	20.8%	25%
Non-Modular	26.7%	0%	28.9%	44.4%

Photographs: Most front pages (66.7 percent) have two photographs, although some newspapers publish as many as four or as few as one. Almost every newspaper in the sample (96.2 percent) uses a dominant photo, but at 53.4 percent of the newspapers, the location of the main photograph varies from day to day. At newspapers which regularly place the dominant photograph in a particular location, the most likely positions are the upper left (20.5 percent) or the middle of the page (21.9 percent).

Mug shots are still widely used by daily newspapers (98.7 percent).

The photographs appearing on a newspaper's front page are most likely to relate directly to a page one story (55.4 percent); however, many front page pictures serve as an "index" to some inside content (19.2 percent) or are not related to any other item in the publication (25.4 percent).

Modular newspapers appear less likely than non-modulars to have a set pattern for their dominant front page photograph. At the modular dailies, 59.1 percent said they vary the location of their dominant photograph, while at the non-modular newspapers, 37.5 percent vary their dominant photo's location. However, the differences were not statistically significant.

And, it was found that when a modular newspaper finds a permanent spot for its dominant photograph, it is most likely in the upper left section of the page; at the non-modular newspapers, the preferred location is the middle of the page (see Table 5, page 23).

Editors were asked to describe the size of the largest photograph they will normally publish. Most editors (62.5 percent) said the photograph would be four columns wide, although several indicated photos occupying three (12.5 percent), five (11.1 percent) or even six (8.3 percent) columns. The length of the horizontal photograph was most likely to be either six (25 percent) or seven (19.4 percent) inches. However, responses on this ranged from five inches to 13 inches.

Color: Like television in the 1960s, newspapers are increasingly turning to color. One daily in three (34.6 percent) said it regularly uses 4-color on its front page and another 28.2 percent of the editors said they occasionally use page one 4-color. Only 16.7 percent of the dailies never use 4-color. Duotone, meanwhile, is used less often; 46.5 percent of the newspapers surveyed said they never use duotone and another 28.2 percent said they use it rarely.

Regular use of 4-color ranges from 58.7 percent of the modular newspapers to 79.2 percent of the non-modular newspapers.

Table 5

Percentage of Modular
and Non-Modular Newspapers'
Placement of Dominant Photo

	Upper Right	Upper Left	Middle Of Page	No Set Pattern
Modular	2.4%	21.4%	14.3%	61.9%
Non-Modular	8.7%	17.4%	34.8%	39.1%

Larger circulation dailies (see note 6) were found to be less likely to use color than those with circulations of less than 50,000. Among the larger dailies, 30.3 percent never use 4-color on their front page; by contrast, 6.8 percent of the smaller circulation newspapers do not use front page 4-color. However, in both circulation categories, about one-third of the newspapers regularly use 4-color on page one (see Table 6, page 25).

While a newspaper's circulation was found to be a predictor of its use of 4-color, the presence of a competing newspaper was not. Among dailies with direct competition, 77.3 percent said they use 4-color, compared to 85.5 percent of the newspapers which do not compete.

Index, digest: Almost every daily (93.5 percent) has a front page index, and one in three (34.5 percent) publishes a front page digest which briefly summarizes the day's contents.

Generally, the index is boxed (65.7 percent). At 58.4 percent of the newspapers surveyed, the location of index varies; however, among those with a set location for the index, it is most likely to be found in the lower left (35.1 percent) or lower right corner (21.6 percent).

Of the newspapers which publish a front page digest[8]

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[8]Several editors indicated that they publish such a digest on the second page of their front section.

Table 6

Percentage of Use
Of 4-Color
By Circulation

	Regularly	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Chi-square
Less than 50,000	34.1%	34.1%	25%	6.8%	
50,000 +	33.3%	21.2%	15.2%	30.3%	8.138*

(df=3)
Tabled chi-square = 7.81

*Significant at .05 level

75 percent place it in a box, and 64 percent have a regular location for the digest. The most common locations are: the left side of the page, either the left column or two left columns (41.2 percent); across the page bottom (23.6 percent) and the lower right section (17.7 percent).

Rules: Most newspapers have abandoned the use of rules. Nine out of ten (90.9 percent) said they do not use rules between stories at all.

The remainder of the findings section deals with editors' attitudes toward graphics, and their perceptions of how readers view a newspaper's design.

Readership and graphics: Of the newspapers which have conducted a readership study in the last three years (constituting 71.8 percent of the sample), only 54.4 percent asked questions about the newspaper's appearance. Those who did received a wide range of reactions from readers. Among the reactions cited in open ended comments were: "drab and uninteresting," "muddy, too dark," "well packaged, well organized" and "modern, breezy, non-traditional."

Generally, the editors indicated that their readership studies showed approval of the use of color

and pages where items are easy to find. One editor said readers were impressed with "photographic excellence" and "arrangement of the newspaper in general." Another claimed the study showed that readers are generally unaware of appearance of a newspaper.

Appearance and the reader: An editors' view: There was a near-even split among the respondents as to whether graphic design is something readers take into account when deciding which newspaper to read. While 49.4 percent of the editors agreed that graphic design is a factor in newspaper selection among readers, 50.6 percent did not agree.[9]

Editors were asked to rate[10] how noticeable they felt each of several graphic devices are to readers. Generally, the most noticeable items were: use of graphs and maps, placement of largest photograph and body type size. Least noticed, in the editors' opinions, were the number of page one columns, flag size and flag location. Using the 1-to-5 noticeability rating scale (see note 10), the mean overall noticeability of the nine items was 3.46 (see Table 7, page 28).

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[9]Several editors pencilled in the word "subliminally" or its equivalent alongside the question, "Graphic design is something the typical newspaper readers is concerned about when deciding which newspaper to read."

[10]On a 1-to-5 scale, where 1 was "very unnoticeable" and 5 was "very noticeable."

Table 7

Percentage of Editors' Perception of what Readers Notice on Page One

	Percentage Very Noticeable	Mean Score
Overall Design	67.3%	3.5
Flag Size	28.6%	2.88
Flag Location	37.7%	3.04
Number of Columns	22.1%	2.53
Maps	75.4%	4.05
Boby Type Size	70.2%	3.82
Headline Typeface	50.7%	3.45
Location of Top Story	58.5%	3.63
Location of Largest Photo	72.8%	4.01

Effort and appearance: Generally, the editors said their newspaper devotes enough effort to its appearance (68 percent); however, 32 percent disagreed. Circulation was found to be a predictor of satisfaction. At the larger circulation dailies, 82 percent of the editors said they were satisfied with the effort devoted to graphics and design; that compares to 56 percent of the editors at the smaller dailies (see Table 8, page 30).

Satisfaction with appearance: Most editors (80.7 percent) said they are satisfied with the front page appearance of their own newspaper, but only 53.2 percent agreed that the front pages of American dailies are generally attractive.

At both larger and smaller circulation dailies, about 80 percent of the editors said they were satisfied with the looks of their own front page. At newspapers with a modular design, 84.8 percent expressed satisfaction, compared to 66.7 percent of editors at non-modular newspapers. The difference was not statistically significant.

Editors were asked to evaluate the appearance of seven prominent dailies. The highest marks (amounting to a "good" rating) went to the Miami Herald and USA Today. The lowest rating (equivalent of "fair") went to the Los Angeles Times (see Table 9, page 31).

Table 8

Editors' Opinion of Their
Newspapers' Effort Concerning Appearance
By Circulation

	Enough Effort	Not Enough Effort	Chi-square
Less than 50,000	56.8%	43.2%	
50,000 +	81.8%	18.2%	4.29*

(df = 1)

Tabled chi-square = 3.84

*Significant at .05 level

Table 9

Mean Scores of Editors' Opinions
of the Attractiveness
of Seven Daily Newspapers

	Percentage Giving High Rating	Percentage Giving Low Rating	Mean Score[1]
Des Moines Register	45.8%	54.2%	2.67
Denver Post	42.3%	57.7%	2.57
Los Angeles Times	25.4%	74.6%	3.02
Miami Herald	80.3%	19.6%	1.98
New York Times	33.7%	66.7%	2.87
USA Today	70.9%	29.1%	2.08
Washington Post	52.8%	47.1%	2.48

[1]The highest rating was 1; the lowest rating was 4.

Finally, editors were asked to indicate (in an open-ended response) which daily newspaper in the United States they felt was most attractive. Of those responding to the question, 43.8 percent said it was the St. Petersburg Times[11] (21 votes). Other dailies receiving more than one vote were USA Today (6), the Boston Globe (4), the Allentown Morning Call (3), the Minneapolis Tribune (2) and the Chicago Tribune (2).

Appearance and competition: Overwhelmingly, editors agreed that when newspapers are in a competing situation, appearance can be a critical factor (94.9 percent).

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[11]In a telephone interview on March 24, 1983, the artist for the St. Petersburg Times, Frank Peters, indicated he was pleasantly surprised at the "vote". He said graphics are vital to newspapers in a competitive situation. While Peters said he finds the Times extremely attractive, he said the majority of American newspapers are unattractive.

Conclusion

Overall, American daily newspapers' front pages are today more graphically pleasing than ever before. Although not all newspapers have adopted a modular page one design, the evidence is clear that newspapers in the 1980s are more modern looking than they were in the last decade. The revolution in newspaper design, which began almost 20 years ago, is continuing. More newspapers now use a six-column format,[12] process color and a modular front page.

Additionally, editors were concerned with the appearance of their newspapers as 94.8% believed that a "good looking" paper can be a factor in a competitive environment. At the larger circulation newspapers, editors were significantly more satisfied with the effort their papers had made in the use of graphics than editors at small newspapers ($<.04$). Also, editors at papers with modular design were more satisfied with the design of their papers than editors at non-modular newspapers.

In addition to editors' attitudes, differences in the use of graphic devices were found between modular and non-modular newspapers. For example, modular papers were less likely to have a set pattern in their design

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[12]For example, Click and Stempel (1979) found 57% of the newspapers using a six-column format. This study found 85.5% using a six-column format.

including the placement of the main headline or the dominant photograph. They also appeared more likely to move the flag from its traditional placement at the top of the page.

However, even among the modern-designed newspapers, some tradition remains: the flag tends to be in a text typeface, as editors may perceive that the flag reflects the paper's personality and its stability to the reader as was discovered at the St. Cloud (Minn.) Times.

Why have newspapers changed their design? Undoubtedly, the advent of phototypesetting equipment has allowed for greater flexibility in varying the column widths. The increase in the use of four color reflects the increase in quality-control printing. And scholarly research shows that readers like innovations and a more packaged product. Editors, likewise, according to this study, thought that a well-designed package was preferable to a poorly-designed package. Consequently, most have made changes. And they report that their readers favor these changes, thus reinforcing the positive aspects of creative change.

What does the future hold for the design of America's daily papers? Undoubtedly, editors will

continue to strive for a cleaner product that will be less complicated in design and more pleasing in appearance. Modern design devices will increasingly be used; and newspapers placed in a competitive situation will continue to rely on graphic devices as part of their bid for readers.

What does the future hold for research in this area? Although this study demonstrated that the devices of "the modern look" have become widespread, the need for future research exists. Design may become a factor in a competitive situation in both medium markets (Trenton, New Jersey) or large markets (Dallas). With its liberal use of color and other modern design techniques, USA Today may have an impact on the markets that it has entered. Editors should continue to be questioned regarding their attitudes toward the importance of graphics in their overall concept of the daily newspaper. And content analyses noting the adoption of modern design must also continue.

It is difficult to predict the rate at which American daily newspapers will continue to adopt modern graphic devices. Between Click and Stempel's content analysis (1979) and this study, more

newspapers have adopted more modern devices and in all likelihood that pattern will continue.

Mott (1958) predicted that the front pages of the future would be simpler, easier to read, less crowded, have fewer complicated headlines, have fewer decks in headlines, have eliminated the vertical rules and switched to modern typefaces. It appears that the newspapers of today prove Mott to be correct about them, and probably even more about the newspapers of tomorrow.

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